

*The Blessedness of the Man, whom the Lord
shall find diligent in his Station.*

139.
A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

O F

Mr. JOB. HEATH;

Who departed this Life, *January 24, 1773.*

In the 52d YEAR of his AGE.

BY BENJAMIN WALLIN, M.A.

Well done, good and faithful Servant. MATT. xxv. 23.

L O N D O N :

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299

SEYMOUR

D. N. A. T. H.



Mr. J. O. S.

L. N. A. T. H.

L. O. N. D. O. N.

L. N. A. T. H.

L. N. A. T. H.

DEATH
Mrs. MARY HEATH,

RELICT OF THE DECEASED;

TO

*Mess. Job, James, and Benjamin Heath, with
their Sister Elisabeth, his surviving Children;*

AND TO THE WHOLE

FAMILY and CHURCH, who lament his
DEPARTURE.

DEARLY BELOVED,

THE ensuing discourse, which was delivered without any intention of its being made public, is presented at the entreaty of the rising generation of our late worthy Friend. Many others are more or less concerned, and it is hoped that some benefit will accrue unto them; but the impression is chiefly designed as a memorial for the children of the deceased. By this

DEDICATION.

unexpected, awful dispensation, the Author himself is deprived of an affectionate and useful son in the gospel, who was a credit to his ministry, and will be a jewel in his crown, in the day of the Lord, he is therefore *capable*, and *does most sincerely* condole, with every mourner, under this painful event, and, with the deepest sympathy, takes leave to address them :

MAY you, M A D A M, who, by the providence of God, are now *again* reduced to to the state of a Widow, in a submission to his will, find an Husband in the almighty and merciful Redeemer, to whose protection and favor I heartily commend you.

My weeping young FRIENDS, who are in grief for your Father and Guide, may the God of all grace support you, and enable you to tread in his steps ! Such a Father, as you have lost, must be a lasting honor to his descendants, who follow his example. It is with pleasure that I observe that your past behavior affords a presumptive

DEDICATION.

tive assurance that you *cannot* forget the man who was the instrument of your being, and who cherished you in his bosom, when forsaken of her who conceived you, or bear the thought of an *everlasting* separation from him : He is, indeed, no more in this world ! But there is a world to come, in which all, who die in Christ, shall meet, and never more part ! Permit me, then, my dear children, solemnly and earnestly to beseech, that you would consider the high obligations you are under to be sober, upright, and diligent, and above all, to be attentive to the important interest of your own precious souls ! O, that each of your hearts may be inspired with the fear of the Lord, and an habitation of that faith which dwelt in your PIOUS ANCESTOR, in the object of which he found every thing needful, for time and eternity. Your Father was not ashamed to own Christ from his youth, and, being sustained through life, adorned his profession : Would to God, that you might, in his stead, be a seed to serve him ! How
glad

DEDICATION.

glad shall I be, if, before I depart, mine eyes should see you embrace his salvation ! Allow me further to remind you, that due respect is required to the RELICT of your late honored Parent ; and that upon no consideration whatever you suffer the bands of brotherly love to be broken : May the Lord direct and succeed you, in every branch of duty, that you may live well, die joyful, and be happy for ever !

AND NOW, BELOVED, with respect to you who were in any other connexion with our dear deceased Brother, may this striking change have a sensible and abiding influence on your spirit and conduct, to the glory of God, and your own best advantage : And if, under a divine blessing, this attempt should be subservient to either, you will certainly be bound to give thanks unto the Lord, and also to pray for,

Your faithful and affectionate Servant,

Porter's Buildings,
Feb. 16, 1775.

BENJAMIN WALLIN.

MATT. xxiv. 46.

*Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord
when he cometh, shall find so doing.*

AMONG the frequent sad changes in this mortal state, I scarce ever address'd you on a more sorrowful occasion ; not only the family of our dear deceased Brother, whose remains were interred the other night, but the congregation in general is in tears. Under this heavy stroke, it becomes me to attempt our mutual exhortation and comfort. Thanks be to God, the glorious gospel, which I have the honor to preach, is sufficient to encourage and support our patience and hope ; in proof of this, if needful, I might remind you of the incarnation of the only begotten of the Father ; how he triumphed in his cross over satan, and all the powers and principalities of darkness, when he made reconciliation for iniquity, his resurrection from

the dead, and his ascension into heaven; I might, as it were, turn aside the vail, and present him at the right hand of God, with the keys of the unseen and eternal world; I might still further lead you into a view of the spirits of the just made perfect, in fulness of joy; and among [them, that of our Friend, whose departure we mourn; and even carry your thoughts to the victory given us, over death and the grave, through our Lord Jesus Christ. This was our subject about sixteen years ago, on the decease of the ancient and honored father of him, who is now cut off in much earlier life. These never-failing springs of consolation to the faithful, when thus bereaved of their companions in the Lord, will be occasionally touched: but, as the deceased was an eminent instance of the power of religion in his day, I shall chiefly aim at exciting us to copy his diligence, in full assurance of hope unto the end, that we be not slothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises, and have to this purpose chose the passage before us.

An elaborate discourse is not to be expected, nor would it suit my design, on the present opportunity: In general, two characters or persons

persons are exhibited; namely, a diligent servant and his Lord; the coming of the Lord is notified, and blessedness is pronounced on his servant. I shall expatiate a little on each, offer a few thoughts by way of improvement, and close with some account of that valuable person now taken from us. And,

I. I may be allowed to begin with the worthiest person. Our Saviour, by the Lord, manifestly intends no other than himself; the Son of man, whose coming is the principal subject of the chapter. This great Son of man, is no other than the Son of God, who was manifested to take away our sins; a needful and arduous work, he graciously undertook, and as nobly finished, when he bore our iniquities in his own body on the tree, which is the basis of our hope in the Messiah.

Now this Jesus, God hath highly exalted, and made both Lord and Christ; he is invested with all power in heaven and earth; the government being on his shoulders, both in the kingdom of providence and grace. To this agrees the vision of Daniel, chap. vii. 13, 14. "Who saw the Son of man
" come with the clouds of heaven to the An-
" cient

“cient of days, and receive of him dominion, “glory, and an everlasting kingdom.” Under him all the angels of heaven are employed, and he is head over all things to the church; the fountain of grace, from whom the saints derive their talents of every kind, for the improvement of which they are accountable to him, for we must all appear at his judgment seat. In a word, this divine Son of man has the power of life and death; he is that one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; the distribution of rewards and punishments is with him, and he will finish his mediatorial office, in a final determination of the state of mankind, and a surrender of the kingdom to the Father.

LET us now take a view of that servant who is here pronounced blessed at his coming. This is usually applied to persons of a public character; and the context shews that our Saviour has a special regard to his apostles, who were charged with the affairs of his kingdom. And no doubt the observation is peculiarly adapted to those who are separated to a particular function or calling, in his service. And accordingly, by a servant of the Lord, we are frequently to understand a minister of Christ, who

who is a steward in his house ; as are likewise, in their rank, those who are in the office of deacons, whose commission is also of divine authority in the churches. And it is well known to many, that this sense of the phrase is not unsuitable to the character of the deceased ; but we are not confined to this idea of a servant. In the 49th verse, they who are smitten by a wicked overseer are styled his *fellow servants* ; and surely every christian is strictly and properly a servant of the Lord, for this purpose he is bought, that he might be devoted to him. He that is called, being free, i. e. his own master, a man of liberty and property in the world, is a servant of Christ, 1 Cor. vii. 22. And this is no less the privilege of the faithful, though in civil bondage, which was the state of some primitive disciples. Christians, of the lowest rank conceivable in life, are servants of the Lord, and accordingly, their diligence and fidelity are urged upon this very motive, Col. iii. 24. " For ye serve the Lord Christ."

If every nominal christian, in the character of a servant, was to act on this principle, there would be no just ground of complaint against him, but the name of the Lord would
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be glorified. So, then, this character belongs to all who fear God; high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, every one falls under this denomination, *a servant of the Lord*: his station in the world, or in the church, however comparatively conspicuous or obscure, is assigned him by Christ, whose real and voluntary servant he is, and considers himself in every state; he is bound in the ties of gratitude and love; and this is the language of his soul, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds.*

THE believer, on self-examination, may find the genuine internal marks of a true affectionate servant of Jesus; his prevailing desire is to *know*, that he may *do* the will of his divine Master, whose interest lies near his heart; nothing more grieves him than the dishonor of his name; and the increase of his kingdom is his chief joy; his highest ambition is to please the Lord, for he seeks the honor that comes from God only, nor seeks it in vain, as appears from the text. In a word, he is a servant that will abide with his Master, and has an habitual aversion to apostacy. Hence, at whatever period his Lord comes, he is doing his will, for he delights in his service,
and

and to finish his work, which perfects the description of this happy man; he is *found so doing*, i. e. diligent in filling up the duties of his station, both civil, and religious, as becometh the gospel of Christ. But it is time,

II. To enquire after the *coming of the Lord* here referred to: *When he cometh*, that is, according to the scope of the place, to judgment, or to call his servant to an account: This phrase implies the *certainly* and *nearness* of his coming, and more especially that his appearance will be *sudden*: The coming of the Lord is a fixed certain thing in the counsel of heaven, and stands clearly revealed in the word; it is granted in the text that the Lord cometh, and indeed to doubt of this, is to question the repeated testimony of scripture, to set the wicked at liberty to sin, without fear, and to destroy the hope of the righteous: Nor, is this certain important visitation far off: Matt. xxv. 6. "Behold, the bridegroom cometh;" that is, instantly, or nearly approaches, and accordingly the virgins are called upon to go out to meet him; the evil servant, who abused the power and talents with

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which he was entrusted, and who is in contrast with the servant in the text, says, at least in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming." This is the language of all proud wanton professors, but the Lord is at hand; the judge is at the door; yea, saith Jesus, Rev. xxii. 12. "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be." And to shew the importance of a practical sense of the *nearness* of this great event, in ver. 20. which is, as it were, the sealing of prophecy, the same is repeated with a peculiar asseveration: "He which testifieth these things saith, *Surely*, I come quickly;" and further, we are told, 1 Thess. v. 2. that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," which agrees with ver. 42. above, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." But the main question is the *period* referred to: In the preceding part of the chapter our Saviour foretels his coming in vengeance on the unbelieving Jews, by which those sinful people were miserably destroyed, with their city and temple, more than 1700 years ago; but our concern with that awful desolation is only as an ensample of admonition, that we provoke not
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the Lord to jealousy, or flatter ourselves in a course of disobedience, under a formal, but hypocritical profession.

I THINK, that the common opinion, if not generally, is often *nearest* the truth ; and few need be told, that this is ultimately referred to the last and great day, when the Saviour shall be revealed from heaven, to the general and eternal judgment, for the punishment of the wicked, and the reward of the righteous : This no doubt is intended in ver. 30. “ And “ then shall appear the sign of the Son of “ man in heaven, and then shall all the “ tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall “ see the Son of man coming in the clouds “ of heaven with power and great glory.” Again, Rev. i. 7. “ Behold, he cometh with “ clouds, and every eye shall see him ; and “ they also which pierced him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” These, and similar passages, are applicable only to this second coming of Christ, when he shall personally, locally, and visibly descend from heaven, in like manner as he ascended from the earth, then shall he judge the quick and the dead, as appointed of the Father : Hence the vision of Daniel, chap.

vii. 10. "The judgment was set, and the books were opened;" and we behold the same scene, in Rev. xx. 11, 12. Of this appearance and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ the scriptures are full, and particularly in Matt. xxv. we have a large, and striking account of that solemn process.

NEVERTHELESS, there is a coming of the Son of man previous to this, which will immediately affect individuals, I mean, *at death*, and confess, that, in my opinion, this is the subject in hand. It has been already hinted, that the exalted Redeemer has the keys of death and hell, that is, the grave; the last enemy now waits the commission of Jesus, nor is there any man dies, but under the administration and government of this King of saints, which, by the way, is one consideration, among many, to reconcile, and satisfy us in every instance of mortality, by which we are bereaved of our affectionate relations and friends. When death comes, the Son of man comes; it is HE that kills, and takes away in his providence; and, except those saints who shall be found alive in the day of revelation, it is *this* coming of the Lord at death, on which he shall find his faithful servants, in the discharge

charge of their duty, for there is no work or device in the grave ; they who are departed in the Lord, rest from their labours ; their work is done ; the dead in Christ will not be found doing his pleasure when he comes to judgment ; the saints in paradise are represented as sitting down with Abraham, &c. a posture of ease, which, though not applicable, in a literal sense, to the separate spirits of the just, implies their freedom from toil ; and what is declared of the Head, is equally true of every member, who has finished his course. Heb. iv. 10. " He that hath entered
 " into his rest, he also hath ceased from his
 " own works, as God did from his." And as this is that coming of the Lord, when his servants are in working circumstances, so we are given to understand, that at death also there is a particular judgment passeth on those who are deceased ; the spirit ascendeth to God who gave it, Eccles. xii. 7. and what less than a judicial notice will then take place on the soul, which we know, by the word of the Lord, immediately enters into happiness or misery ? The royal preacher therefore presently adds, ver. 14. " God shall bring every work into
 " judgment," &c. To which agrees Heb.
 ix. 27.

ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." A passage that may well be accommodated to both future advents of Christ, at least his coming at death is not to be excluded: besides this coming of the Son of man is nearest, and has a more direct influence on individuals in the present state, the day and hour of which are unknown, and for which we ought to be ready: The future public and general award stands in a certain connexion with that which passeth at death, and is ever to be kept in mind; but, strictly speaking, it is our decease we are waiting for, as the period of action, the uncertainty of which, in point of time, is a motive to watch and be diligent in our station, working while it is day, that when the night cometh, in which no man can work, it may appear that we have persevered in the perfect and acceptable will of God, to the end, that so, being found of the Lord in our place, we may not be ashamed, but cheerfully answer his call, when the summons comes, knowing that he will approve, and reward all those who are faithful. This leads,

III. To

III. To the remaining branch of our subject ; namely, the honor and happiness of that servant, who answers the description in the text : “ Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing.” And here, I apprehend, the blessedness particularly designed, like the coming of the Lord, takes place on the decease of the subject. It is *immediate*, for it is pronounced on the saint, on that visitation in which he is found doing the will of his Lord. The sacred declaration before us is of the same tenor with Rev. xiv. 13. “ I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write : Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” This blessedness then does not wait the return of the just ; that glory is insured to the dying believer, the certain prospect of which is his joy ; but, the faithful servant, whom his Lord finds doing well, is blessed, antecedent to his attaining the resurrection of the dead, in several interesting respects, as follow :

1. IN respect of the *testimony of his conscience*. Happy is the man whose heart does not condemn him in the views of eternity ! I have seen awful instances of the negligent and

ard slothful on a dying bed : Ah ! the grievous accusations with which some have been wounded, who have, through one temptation or another, grown weary of the Lord and his ways ! Like sharp pointed arrows they have pierced through the soul ! But who can conceive the direful anguish of a fallen professor, when the delusions of sense vanish, on his separation from the body, and his naked spirit comes before a holy God, self-condemned, in confusion and despair ! Not so the man who abides in Christ, working righteousness, and who is found in his duty ; as in the day of judgment, so, when visited by death he will have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming, 1 John ii. 28. Experience proves this, chap. iii. 24. “ If our hearts condemn us not, *then* have we confidence towards God.” Hence the courage of some in a dying hour, like that of the apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. “ My departure is at hand ; I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith.”

2. The diligent servant is blessed, *in point of reputation.* Prov. x. 7. “ The memory of the just is blessed.” That servant who fills up his station, obtains an honorable character

character. Adulation is the aversion of the serious; and the popular applause of a vain giddy multitude no man of sense will covet; but the *just* esteem of others, which results from his having served God in his generation, is not to be despised by the man of religion, or excluded from a share in his blessedness. To have a good name in the world for integrity and virtue, and in the church for faithfulness and love, or in consequence of being fruitful in every good word and work, is a glory to be sought by every one who bears the name of a christian. But,

3. He is blessed, *in the approbation, and reward of the Lord whom he serves*. And this is the blessedness referred to in the text, as appears from what follows, ver. 47. "Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods;" Not that Christ has any thing further of office or work for his saints, in the world to come; we have already seen that their labour terminates with the day of this life; it is figuratively spoken, in allusion to the custom of generous lords, who advance their upright and diligent servants into further confidence and honor, and the meaning is, that he shall have an ample and unlimited reward. It may be considered as part

of his blessedness, that he rests from his labours as mentioned in Rev. xiv. 13. Job also says, chap. iii. 17. "There the weary are at rest; their toil and sorrow are over. In the obedience of faith, in a way of action or suffering, however delightful in itself to those who love God there are many cares, fears, temptations, and conflicts, insomuch that "ye have need of "patience, that after ye have done the will "of God, ye might receive the promise," Heb. x. 36. And among other advantages that accrue to the christian by death, that of being free from constant danger, and frequent terror of mortality itself, to which many are subject, is none of the least; but, in yonder regions of life, we are told, Rev. xxi. 4. "God shall wipe away all tears from their "eyes, and there shall be no more death."

BUT the blessedness of the righteous on their decease, is not merely negative; they are happy, in that when divested of the body they are not found naked, but are cloathed upon with their house, which is from heaven, 2 Cor. v. 2. We can form no adequate idea of the glory and joy, which *immediately* commence in the separate spirit of the redeemed. What heart hath conceived the honor and triumph of

labours of a soul convoyed by ministring angels, to
 also says, the gates of paradise, and thence conducted by
 at rest; Jesus himself, to its appointed mansion, among
 bedience those who are before the throne in the hea-
 g, how- vens, having washed their robes, and made
 ve God them white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev.
 ons, and vii. 14. ? Yet these are the intimations given
 need of us in scripture, concerning those who die in
 the will the Lord ; but, who can comprehend the rap-
 promise, ture of the saint, thus welcomed to the joy of
 vantage his Lord, when he first tunes his harp, with
 that of the celestial choir, to the song of Moses and
 frequent the Lamb ! This will be the joyful reward of
 many are that servant, whom his Lord finds doing his
 yonder will ; he is therefore blessed indeed ; and espe-
 xxi. 4 cially when we consider, that there is an in-
 m their fallible connexion between his present honor
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 on their life everlasting. The fruition of the saints
 re hap- with Christ, in a separate state, is an earnest
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 2 Cor. in the text, " Have praise of God," 1 Cor.
 of the iv. 5. Then shall he be blessed of the King,
 mence from his white throne of judgment ; his ad-
 What versaries shall be cloathed with shame, satan
 triumph bruised under his feet, and even death and the

grave abolished for ever, while he, with all saints, shall be seated at the right hand of the judge, his Redeemer, with whom he shall ascend to the Father, and dwell for ever, in the inheritance of the kingdom, prepared for the chosen, from the foundation of the world, Matt. xxv. In a word, both in respect of his fruition at death, and his reward in the last and great day, this faithful and fruitful servant will find, as Peter expresses it, 2d Ep. i. 11. "That an entrance shall be ministered
 "unto him abundantly, into the everlasting
 "kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus
 "Christ." This, beloved, is the delightful prospect given us in the gospel, of our departed christian friends, among whom we behold the dear man, whose decease we now mourn; on account of *ourselves* we *decently* mourn, but on *his* account, if faith does its office, we shall certainly see reason to rejoice, and rather to wish ourselves with him, than repine at his release.

THE sum is, that Jesus, the Son of man, who is both Lord and Christ, now retained in the heavens, into which he ascended, on having finished the work of redemption, is at hand: Behold, he comes quickly, not only in respect
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of his visible second appearance, when there will be a general judgment of the quick and the dead, but, lo, he comes by *death* to individuals, as in the instance of our late beloved Friend, to require their soul, and an account of their stewardship; and happy is that faithful and diligent servant, who shall be found in his duty; he is blessed, not only on account of the satisfaction and boldness, which result from the testimony of his conscience, and in point of reputation, both which are invaluable; but he is infinitely more so, in respect of the honors he shall receive of his great divine Master, and *that*, both immediately on his exit from the body, and at the resurrection of the just. O, may this blessedness be the lot of each one present, that we may rejoice together, at the coming of our Lord!

To our further improvement of a subject, which so nearly concerns us, I shall mention three things, with a reflection or two, and close with some anecdotes of the deceased, which I hope may be useful. And,

I. We may note, that a life of faith is a *working life*; it is a life of diligent action. True, indeed, faith and works are in direct
and

and eternal opposition, in point of justification, which is of the former, and not of the latter; the christian is justified *freely by grace*, in a way of believing, and so comes into his title to life, as the gift of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone he has a justifying righteousness; but in point of conversation and obedience, faith is operative and effectual, it purifieth the heart, and works by love: so that where there is a cordial divine faith, there will be working for Christ, or doing those things which are well-pleasing in his sight, 1 John iii. 22.

Two capital articles of divine revelation, by which every man will be judged at the tribunal of Christ, are always to be had in remembrance; the one you find in Eph. ii. 8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." The other is what James the apostle declares in his epistle, chap. ii. namely, "that faith without works is dead," like the body without the spirit, a breathless corpse, unprofitable and odious; it cannot save, and therefore is not the faith of God's elect, who believe to the saving of the soul. Confidence

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dence in an imperfect righteousness, and such is the best human righteousness, since the fall; I say, to trust in an imperfect obedience, for being justified in the sight of God, who will not acquit; and a dependence on a fruitless dead faith, are equally fatal to the subject. An indifference about the truth, or the ordinances of the gospel, is alarming and dangerous, and unworthy a disciple of Jesus; on the other hand, the most accurate ideas of evangelical doctrine; yea, though they are joined with the most regular christian profession, will stand for nothing, in favor of the man, who is negligent and slothful, but will rather aggravate his condemnation, at the appearance of his Judge.

-II. HENCE we learn also, that *final perseverance* in the way of the Lord, is essential to the character of a christian. This good and faithful servant, who stands opposed to the unprofitable one, ver. 48. is found doing the will of his Lord; he therefore holds out to the end, and to him alone the assurance of salvation is given, Matt. x. 22. so then, the nominal christian, who tires and falls, is deficient in character, and will certainly come short

short of the promise. Some men will have it that the true saint may fall in this manner, tho' the work is of God, and his Redeemer, the Advocate with the Father, with authority, prays for him, that his faith should not fail; they strenuously urge that he may cease to believe, and perish at last; and when a promising professor turns aside, and makes shipwreck, concerning the faith, they vaunt in their error, as if they knew not, that tares may grow up with the wheat; but the current of scripture is against it, and our text in particular. This description of the man who shall be owned, and rewarded at the coming of his Lord, proves the final perseverance of the upright and faithful. And further,

III. It appears that the righteous are animated to hold out in the obedience of faith, by a certain prospect of being honored at the coming of Christ.

THE manifest design of our Saviour, is to encourage his disciples to persevere with all diligence in their station, till he comes, that is, as we have seen, to the end of their life; and, what is the [motive? The *blestness* they then shall obtain. This argument is

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used in Heb. x. 35. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward;" and in chap. xi. 26. we are told that Moses had respect to this, "when he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." To which agrees, Gal. vi. 9. "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not;" and again, Rom. ii. 7. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor," &c. But time would fail to enumerate all the passages of scripture, which express the same truth.

NOR does this, when duly considered, favour of legality, or interfere with the reign of free grace, in the reward of the righteous: for, 1. All the good works of the saints are the fruits of their election in Christ, Eph. ii. 10. "which God hath before *ordained* that we should walk in them." The scripture is plain, these vessels of mercy were afore prepared* unto glory: Rom. ix. 23. where the same word is used, they were prepared; that is, it was determined in the counsel of God, that the redeemed

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* *εργασματα*.

should walk in good works. This holy mystery is also declared, Eph. i. 4. "We are chosen in him, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." And accordingly says our Lord to his apostles, John xv. 16. "I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit." Thus the Father and the Son are agreed in the end of their choice. It is true, this divine determination does not immediately and directly make the subject good, but it is infallibly connected with a decree of what is needful to the effect in due time, and eventually secures the holiness of the chosen, since the counsel of the omniscient and immutable Jehovah shall certainly stand, Psalm xxxiii. 11. Good works therefore are in closer connexion with the election of God, than some apprehend, so far is that doctrine of the gospel, when justly stated, from being licentious. Besides, 2. The faithful "are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." This is expressly asserted in Eph. ii. 10. It is in virtue of his union to Christ, and of grace derived from him, that the believer performs any good work. John xv. 5. "Without, or
"severed

severed from me, says the Lord, ye can do, nothing." And, 3. The *death* of Jesus is the meritorious cause of the spiritual life, power, and fruitfulness of the saints; and consequently of all the blessedness they enjoy in the future recompense of reward. Eternal life itself is the gift of God, conveyed through the blood of the Mediator: Heb. ii. 10. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

THE title believers have to the fruition of their heavenly inheritance is grounded in the merit of their Saviour, and therefore it is styled "the kingdom of Christ," Eph. v. 5. And this is the deserving cause of whatever peculiar honors may hereafter be conferred on particular saints, as the reward of their services in the present world; had not Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and so redeemed them from the curse of the law, they had never obtained mercy to believe, or been in a moral capacity to perform a good work: To his blood therefore we are to attribute the honor they receive, and to this it is ascribed.

Rev. i. 5, 6. "Unto him that loved us, and
 "washed us from our sins in his own blood,
 "and hath made us kings and priests unto
 "God, and his Father."

BUT there is another consideration, which
 will abundantly prove, that this future bles-
 sedness of the righteous, and their eye to it,
 in the obedience of faith, is truly evangelical
 and agreeable to the grace of the gospel, which
 deserves particular notice; namely, that there
 is no *proportion* between their honor, and
 their service: it is an *exceeding* and eternal
 weight of glory: To be owned of Christ, and
 to be glorified with him in the kingdom of
 heaven, will infinitely surpass the works of the
 most eminent saint on earth, who, when he
 has done all, should "say, he is an unprofitable
 "servant, in point of merit, he has done that
 "which it was his duty to do," Luke xvii.
 10. and, however sincere, he may well blush
 at the manifest imperfections, with which his
 best performances are stained. On this arti-
 cle it is needful to distinguish, and I crave
 your attention.

IN one view, I think, the scripture shews,
 that there will be a wise proportion between
 the services of the saints, and their honors in

the

the kingdom of heaven, to be completed at the resurrection. In this sense every man, among the faithful themselves, will receive according to his works. "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 6. And in 1 Cor. xv. 41. where the apostle is treating on this glorious recompense of the faithful, he has these remarkable, striking expressions, "One star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." The same idea is conveyed in the parable of the talents, Luke xix. 17, &c. He that had gained *five* pounds was made ruler over *five* cities; but he that had gained *ten* pounds was advanced over *ten* cities; so that the honor was in exact proportion to the improvement each made, yet they equally improved, according to their ability, which, by the way, shews the sovereignty of their Lord in his dealings with them. In like manner God dispenses his talents and rewards among his saints, according to the good pleasure of his will. Nevertheless, by the word of the Lord, we understand, that in every instance of faithfulness and love, its reward will be redundant.

dant. Matt. xxv. 21. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." How *many more*, than the *few*, is not said, but the declaration implies, that the balance is greatly in favor of the servant: Herein lies an essential difference between the distribution of justice to the wicked, and the communications of glory to the righteous; the one is in strict proportion to the desert of the action, the other is bountiful and free, insomuch that in allusion to the apostle's expression, concerning pardon, justification, and eternal life: Rom. v. 20. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." I may soberly assert, that where the works of a just man have most abounded, his future reward will still more abound, even to an unspeakable degree; not measured by the *virtue* of his action, but according to the *munificence* of his heavenly Father, which is boundless: this shews that the reward is not of debt but of grace; a consideration of importance to adjust our notions concerning the place, or influence of good works in a future state. They are *now* of use, for the manifestation of our faith, and the glory of God; and they are also of great benefit to those who are connected

connected with the saint in this life ; but they avail *hereafter*, not indeed as causes of our right to heaven and glory ; for these services, however sincere, or comparatively many and excellent, have no such intrinsic value or desert ; besides, this would be to place them in the room of Christ, in whose mediatorial imputed righteousness alone, is found our title to the fruition of glory ; but they are of use at *death*, and will be so in the *day of judgment*, as vouchers of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord ; and likewise, which is more directly to the point, as occasions of honor and joy at his coming ; so then, here is a cogent motive to the utmost diligence in every good work ; but no room for boasting.

AND now, beloved, have we any reason to be ashamed of the gospel we preach ? Has it not a favorable aspect on sound morals, and a worthy character ? True, we proclaim the free grace of God in the justification of a penitent sinner, through faith in the blood of his Son : In this respect the Holy Ghost tells us, Tit. iii. 5. as in many other places, we are given to understand, that “ not by works of
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“ righteousness, which we have done, but ac-
“ cording

"according to his mercy he has saved us," &c. Nevertheless we as constantly affirm that no man has any claim to the character of a christian, or the subject of this mercy, whose faith is not proved by his works, yet we are represented by many as Antinomians, yea, some are bold enough, through ignorance or malice, to * charge us with frightening the people away

* Not long since a sermon, delivered to a congregation of Protestants dissenters, was printed, in which the anonymous author, having ascribed the decay of their churches to a disrelish for practical religion, in page 28, 29. makes the following invidious report, of those who preach the doctrines of grace; "they tell us, says he, "we are to be saved without good works, and affect to "make us afraid of nothing so much as our good works, "as if they were the only things that would condemn "us." These preachers he represents as admired, "only because they have this comprehensive thing to say, "Trust all to Christ, for he has done all." And, very lately, the candid author of another sermon, published on occasion of the late unsuccessful attempt of the Dissenters, for relief from the obligation to subscribe to the articles of the Church of England, having represented those which relate to predestination, original sin, man's free will, &c. in a way that might provoke the indignation of the sensible and serious, he declares, without reserve, page 17. "That if it was necessary for christian ministers to believe *these*, he should wish there was not a christian minister in the world." Yea, and scruples not to assert, that "if there are any doctrines that "ought not to be tolerated, they are such as these," which

away from good works, as the only things that would ruin them ; yet these men affect to be serious and candid, and their mouths are full of benevolence and charity. But,

2. It is the will of God, "that with well-doing, ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," 1 Pet. ii. 15. Let us therefore diligently work all the day long ; and truly, without good works, without temperance, justice, gratitude, and an holy conversation, as becometh the gospel, we deceive our own souls under a profession of

which, says he, undermine the blessed character of the Deity, strike at the root of all morality and religion, which counteract the force of the best laws, and make men uncharitable, malevolent," &c. These are the frightful, but false and malignant insinuations, against the Calvinists of every denomination, as enemies to virtue and holiness of life. I am totally unacquainted with either of these writers, but their spirit is obvious : It is plainly the reverse of charity and benevolence, and it is as easy to see what these enemies to all mankind, as the latter is pleased to style those who propagate the doctrines against which he inveighs, p. 18. are to expect from the hands of such men, if it should ever be in their power ; but it is hoped that this fiery zeal, however impetuous, will be finally impotent ; and I presume that many who are not satisfied in the tenets, thus shamefully misrepresented, disallow this bitterness, and that few, if any, will scruple to pronounce it unreasonable.

E christianity ;

christianity ; we can neither prove our character, nor adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour ; and what must become of the slothful and barren professor, against whom his family, the world, or the church, justly cry out for his negligence, treachery, or wickedness ! what indeed but shame and misery must be his portion ! nor shall he plead ignorance. Matt. xxv. 30. “ Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth ! ” The man that imagines he shall share with the blessed at the coming of the Lord, after a life of negligence and folly, or even without a perseverance in holiness, will be no less deceived, than he who makes his good works, as he calls them, his justifying righteousness, in a contempt or neglect of that righteousness, which is of God by faith, brought in by the Messiah. And,

3. SEEING it is certain that blessed is that servant whom the Lord shall find diligent in his station, should not this reconcile us to the departure of our friends, who are overtaken in the midst of their labours ? True, such vigilant, honorable, pains-taking servants of Christ are choice relations and companions !

such

such a man is as the gold of Ophir ; and it is fit, when he is under dangerous symptoms through illness, that on our knees we beseech his recovery, with strong cries and tears, as I am persuaded many of us have for our late dear Brother, for who could tell whether God would be gracious to us, that he might live ? But now he is removed, we may bewail our *own* loss, but for *him* we cannot regret, or even *charitably* wish, were it possible, that he should return : Let us rather consider the end of his conversation, and follow his faith, that we also, when Jesus comes, may be found in our duty, and have praise of God, who is no respecter of persons.

I N order to this I shall close with some account of the deceased, which I hope will be received with candor, as it is ingenuously designed to magnify the divine goodness and grace he received, and to excite your diligence in the ways of the Lord.

IT was the happiness of our late dear Friend to be acquainted with the scriptures from his childhood ; but still more to be early convinced of his condition as a sinner, and above all, that he soon obtained mercy to believe ; having trusted in the Lord, though but a

stripling, like David, he was not ashamed; nor would he *delay* to lift himself openly under the Captain of salvation, in whom he had everlasting righteousness and strength: This was soon after my entrance on the pastoral office, namely, December 1741. After he was baptized, I conducted the youth to his place in the church, so that he was among the *first fruits* of my labor in Christ.

SOMETIMES an early profession is as the morning cloud; as the early dew it vanisheth without any effect: Youthful lusts, under certain temptations, soon destroy the superficial religion of many, which was only a deceitful appearance, and leave those who embraced them to bewail their apostacy!

THANKS be to God, this sincere convert, like many others, since planted among us, grew up as a willow by the water course; and the circumstances of his ancient and venerable parents, who were highly esteemed, requiring his assistance, his faith soon appeared in that genuine and noble fruit of righteousness, FILIAL PIETY. The first produce of the labor of his hands was applied in obedience to the *first* command with a promise; HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER!

MOTHER ! This honor was continued, and encreased with his abilities, to the end of their days.

THE Lord is often graciously pleased to crown his own gifts in the present life; and accordingly several extraordinary occurrences in providence, opened a way quite unexpected, for the exercise of this young man's talents, in the occupation to which he was trained, and such was his success, that he soon became one of the most considerable of his calling, in this great metropolis.

IN the midst of these smiles, and when about to enter on a still more advantageous situation, which might have further extended his usefulness, alas ! he was suddenly taken : " His breath goeth forth, " he returneth to his dust ;" and all his thoughts of this life, so far as they related to himself, instantly perished !

PROSPERITY frequently discovers a vanity of heart, and more or less pampers the pride and wantonness of the flesh, insomuch that we may fear for the pious themselves, under any great change in their favor, but though our friend mourned over like passions with his brethren, it pleased the God of all grace to keep

keep him sober-minded. I never saw, nor even heard of an instance in which he vaunted on account of these extraordinary advantages in life ; and may I not appeal to the world for his regularity, uprightness, and diligence in business ? But let his mournful widow and children ; let those with whom he was concerned in the nearest ties of natural and civil relation, give him his due. Permit me only a word or two further, on his religious connexion and conduct.

THIS dear man behaved in a manner so constant, orderly, and faithful in the house of God, that he soon gained a just and universal esteem of his brethren.

IN the year 1753, he was nominated, with two other persons, one since departed to his rest, the other, through mercy, still with us, to serve the church in the honorable, though self-denying, office of a Deacon : At first he appeared very backward, for, besides his distant situation, and other inconvenient circumstances, which might have excused him from this labor of love, he thought himself unmeet for the charge ; but, at length, being convinced there was need of him, and that the Lord, by his church, had called him to
this

this sacred and important function, like the prophet, when touched by the seraphim, he most willingly offered himself, being ready to say, "Here am I, send me." This office he was enabled to sustain nineteen years; an example of fidelity, condescension, and kindness: His decease is therefore a very great loss to the church, to the poor more especially, to our honored brethren, who co-operated with him in the same commission, and to no one more than to your sympathizing minister.

WE have reason to be thankful for our promising circumstances in general as a people, yet our consolation in Christ, and our comfort of love, would be still greater, and our assemblies more perfect, if every one had an heart to copy this man, who, notwithstanding his habitation was so far, and his care to be at home with his family, scarce ever was absent either part of the Lord's day; or if prevented, he would, if possible, acquaint us with the reason: Thus he conscientiously persevered full thirty-one years in communion. Nor is it to the honor or profit of any one in the like sacred fellowship, that they who are over him, or his fellow members, mourn before the Lord his dissipation and inconstancy?

OUR

OUR dear deceased Friend had learned to reconcile *diligence in worldly business* with his *duty in the sanctuary*: an excellent lesson, which some need be taught. These are not to be separated in any honorable and fruitful professor. He that neglects his temporal concerns, omits the necessary means of usefulness in the church; and, however assiduous or successful a man may be in the world, if he is not ready to bear his proportion in the house of God, what other is he than an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself? And not only on the more public worship, but also in our assemblies for discipline, our brother was constant. These are meetings of the utmost importance; and I promise myself, by the attention paid to them, especially of late, that there is a growing sense of this in the community, which is a very encouraging symptom: And though it was incompatible with the calling of our late dear Friend, to be frequently at our weekly associations for prayer, which are equally useful and comfortable, yet, if he knew the pastor was absent, or that there was any particular need of his presence, he was sure to attend; so that he was far from slighting those opportunities.

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THE last time our Brother led the church to the throne of grace; he was singularly earnest with the Lord, that our faith should not fail, in the article of death. There was then no appearance of natural disorder upon him, and little did we think that our separation was so near, but it was the pleasure of the Almighty, whose will be done, soon to deprive us of this choice fellow member. A few days acute illness terminated in his decease, during most part of which he was not conversable. What of instruction or comfort we may have lost by this must be left; but, through mercy, our hope concerning him did not depend on any thing that he might say in his last moments; nevertheless, there is one remarkable event, which, I presume, will not be indecent to mention, and am persuaded will afford a consolation in our sorrows. The day before his confinement, having occasion to write me some lines, though in haste, and, as I apprehend, with his people about him as usual, yet among them are the following pithy and pious expressions:—"I bless God for the continuance
" of your life as a minister, the Lord is own-
" ing the same to my soul, for the growth of
" grace, and increase of love to the brethren.

F

I know

“ I know here is no abiding place ; I find
“ no solid satisfaction short of Christ Jesus
“ my Lord ; and there, at times, I can re-
“ joice in finding every thing my soul stands
“ in need of, not only for time, but for
“ eternity.” And after dropping some other
things for the encouragement of his minister,
which he was frequently doing, he proceeds in
these striking words, “ I cannot conclude
“ without telling you I never saw more of
“ the emptiness of this world, and all its
“ delights and honors, than at this time, and
“ count them all loss that I may win Christ.”

SUCH was the frame of this precious man,
when his *unknown* hour was at hand ; so gra-
cious was the Lord to us in exciting him, in
this *occasional* manner, to communicate the
habitual stretch of his soul towards Jesus
and heaven, in the midst of much worldly
business !

LET us comfort one another, my dear fel-
low mourners, and admire the wisdom and
goodness of our heavenly Father, in granting
this seasonable testimony from his *undesigned*
hand, which could not be obtained from his
dying lips ! True ; it is a great breach !

A pria-

A principal man is removed ! But this is our satisfaction and joy, that we may soberly conclude that he is now a pillar in the temple of Jerusalem above, to remain in that city of our God, until the revelation of Jesus Christ, who found him doing his will. May we in like manner be ready ; “ for in such an hour “ as we think not, THE SON OF MAN COMETH.”



F I N I S.



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